

THE CARPENTER;

Or, the DANGER of EVIL COMPANY.

THERE was a young West-country
man,
A Carpenter by trade;
A skilful wheelwright too was he,
And few such Waggon made.

No Man a tighter Barn cou'd build,
Throughout his native town,
Thro' many a village round was he,
The best of workmen known.

His father left him what he had,
In sooth it was enough;
His shining pewter, pots of brass,
And all his household stuff.

A little cottage too he had,
For ease and comfort plann'd,
And that he might not lack for ought,
An acre of good land.

A pleasant orchard too there was,
Before his cottage door;
Of cider and of corn likewise,
He had a little store.

Active and healthy, stout and young,
No business wanted he;
Now tell me reader if you can,
What man more blest cou'd be?

To make his comfort quite compleat,
He had a faithful Wife;
Frugal and neat and good was she,
The blessing of his life.

Where is the Lord, or where the Squire,
Had greater cause to praise,
The goodness of that bounteous hand,
Which blest his prosperous days?

Each night when he return'd from work,
His wife so meek and mild,
His little supper gladly dress'd,
While he caress'd his child.

One blooming babe was all he had,
His only darling dear,
The object of their equal love,
The solace of their care.

O what cou'd ruin such a life,
And spoil so fair a lot?
O what cou'd change so kind a heart,
All goodness quite forgot?

With grief the cause I must relate,
The dismal cause reveal,
'Twas EVIL COMPANY and DRINK,
The source of every ill.

A Cooper came to live hard by,
Who did his fancy please;
An idle rambling Man was he,
Who oft had cross'd the seas.

This Man could tell a merry tale,
And sing a merry song;
And those who heard him sing or talk,
Ne'er thought the ev'ning long.



But vain and vicious was the song,
And wicked was the tale;
And every pause he always fill'd,
With cider, gin, or ale.

Our Carpenter delighted much,
To hear the Cooper talk;
And with him to the Ale-house oft,
Wou'd take his evening walk.

At first he did not care for drink,
But only lik'd the fun;
But soon he from the Cooper learnt,
The same sad course to run.

He said the Cooper's company,
Was all for which he car'd;
But soon he drank as much as he,
To swear like him soon dar'd.

His hammer now neglected lay,
For work he little car'd;
Half finish'd wheels, and broken tools,
Were strew'd about his yard.

To get him to attend his work,
No prayers cou'd now prevail;
His hatchet and his plane forgot,
He never drove a Nail.

His cheerful ev'nings now no more,
With peace and plenty smil'd;
No more he sought his pleasing Wife,
Nor hugg'd his smiling child.

For not his drunken nights alone,
Were with the Cooper past;
His days were at the Angel spent,
And still he stay'd the last.

No handsome Sunday suit was left,
Nor decent holland shirt;
No nosegay mark'd the Sabbath day,
But all was rags and dirt.

No more his Church he did frequent,
A symptom ever sad;
Where once the Sunday is mispent,
The week days must be bad.

The cottage mortgag'd for its worth,
The favourite orchard sold;
He soon began to feel th' effects
Of hunger and of cold.

The pewter dishes one by one,
Were pawn'd, till none was left;
And wife and babe at home remain'd
Of every help bereft.

By chance he call'd at home one night,
And in a furl mood,
He bade his weeping wife to get
Immediately some food.

His empty cupboard well he knew
Must needs be bare of bread;
No rather on the rack he saw,
Whence cou'd he then be fed?

His wife* a piteous sigh did heave,
And then before him laid
A basket cover'd with a cloth
But not a word she said.

Then to her husband gave a knife
With many a silent tear;
In haste he tore the cover off,
And saw his child lay there.

"There lies thy babe, the mother said,
"Oppress'd with famine sore;
"O kill us both—'twere kinder far,
We cou'd not suffer more."

The Carpenter, struck to the heart,
Fell on his knees straitway;
He wrung his hands—confess'd his sins,
And did both weep and pray.

From that same hour the Cooper more,
He never wou'd behold;
Nor wou'd he to the Ale-house go,
Had it been pay'd with gold.

His Wife forgave him all the past,
And sooth'd his sorrowing mind,
And much he griev'd that e'er he wrong'd
The worthiest of her kind.

By lab'ring hard, and working late,
By industry and pains,
His Cottage was at length redeem'd,
And sav'd were all his gains.

His Sundays now at Church were spent,
His home was his delight.
The following verse himself he made,
And read it every night:

*The Drunkard Murders Child and Wife,
Nor matters it a pin,
Whether he stabs them with his knife,
Or starves them by his gin.*

* See Berquin's Gardener.

[Enter'd at Stationers Hall.]

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